



**TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE ALLIANCE
FOR THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING
JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

Good afternoon Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Abby Anderson; I am the executive director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance. The Alliance is a statewide public policy and advocacy organization dedicated to stopping the criminalization of Connecticut's children. We believe in prevention to keep children from entering the system, and best practice and policy to help kids who do enter the system to be successful.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the governor's proposed budget adjustments for the Department of Children and Families. In short, **the Alliance is gravely concerned about the Governor's proposed cuts to the Department's juvenile justice services. In reality, an expansion of funds is needed in this area to fulfill the Governor's mandate to close CJTS, Connecticut's youth prison, by July 1, 2018, and to serve youth diverted from detention by legislative changes effectuated January 1, 2017. We believe these proposed cuts will both threaten the state's commitment to vulnerable youth and drive Connecticut toward more expensive and less effective alternatives for serving youth.**

Community-based services needed in lieu of CJTS

Language explaining juvenile justice budget cuts says, in part, that they "reflect delays in new program development in FY 18-19." That is the exact timeline during which DCF's community-based juvenile justice services need to *expand* in order to effectuate the Governor's mandate to close CJTS, Connecticut's youth prison, by July 1, 2018.

In order to effectively close CJTS, and, frankly, to effectively serve youth DCF is already diverting from CJTS, communities need to expand upon what already exists in their neighborhoods, and create additional programs to provide alternatives for parole officers to use for their clients. This significant cut to the DCF's budget seems to do the opposite, further reducing DCF's ability to have robust services available in communities. This is concerning because this directly impacts their ability to fulfill the Governor's mandate to close CJTS by July 1, 2018.

DCF provided an outline of service expansion/creation and the associated costs in the closure plan it created in October, 2016. Included are an expansion of substance abuse treatment, vocational readiness and wrap around services. For more details, please see the highlighted yellow sections from the two tables taken from DCF's *Plan for the Closure of the Connecticut Juvenile Training School*, pages 13 and 14 at the end of this document.

DCF requires funds to effectively serve youth who would previously have been held in pre-trial detention

As of January 1, 2017, detention can no longer be used for youth who are not a risk to public safety. Previously, the law allowed youth who were a risk to themselves or who had an unsafe home to be detained. DCF and the Judicial Branch, according to statute, have developed an implementation strategy and plan to provide services to youth who have immediate needs that must be addressed without confining that child in detention. DCF needs additional capacity for shelter, respite, substance abuse and mental health services to address this cadre of youth new to their responsibility.

The Governor's Raise the Age proposal would add to DCF's juvenile justice population in the second year of this biennium budget, but we see no funds allocated to address this need

The Alliance is fully supportive of work to ensure that the justice system holds young people accountable in ways that are more therapeutic and better for public safety. The Governor's call to include 18 year olds in the juvenile justice system starting July 1, 2018, would increase DCF's committed delinquent caseload during that budget year. As far as we can see, the current budget proposal does not address those needs. However, for all of the reasons already outlined in this testimony, those additional funds must be appropriated to ensure the 18 year olds actually have access to the services and programs that comprise the very reason for raising the age in the first place.

Though the state of Connecticut may be in a budget crisis, we have learned by experience that investing in the front end of juvenile justice pays social AND financial dividends. The fiscal price tag on CJTS is more than \$30 million per year. The long-term social and budgetary ramifications of keeping this youth prison open are greater still.

GOAL 2: Improve community supervision of youth The purpose of this goal is to ensure that youth have frequent ongoing contact with their Juvenile Justice Social Workers and providers to ensure they are not engaging in behaviors that could lead to their re-arrest or re-admission to a secure facility.

Action Step	Responsible	Timeframe	Estimated Cost
Revise the functional job description of JJ social workers to emphasize restorative justice principles and family engagement	Human Resources Division	Jan.-Mar. 2017	No cost
Provide training to all Juvenile Justice Social Workers on techniques to support their	DCF Academy for Workforce Development	Apr.- Jun. 2017	No cost

revised job description			
Implement more frequent visitation standards between youth and their Juvenile Justice Social Workers based on a Structured Decision Making matrix, like the one used by New York City	DCF Regional Administrators	Apr.-Jun. 2017	TBD: There may be additional staffing cost associated with this action step
Implement intensive community services, such as ROCA	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services	July 2017	\$300,000

GOAL 3: Increase access/availability of non-residential community-based services
The purpose of this goal is to ensure appropriate community-based services are available across the state to meet youth's needs and decrease the need for secure care.

Action Step	Responsible	Timeframe	Estimated Cost
Expand vocational training and employment opportunities at CJTS and in the community	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services; Unified School District 2; Regional Systems Program Directors	July 2017	\$500,000
Expand access to substance abuse treatment and recovery supports, including MST-TAY, MST-FIT and ACRA-ACC	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services; Unified School District 2; Regional Systems Program Directors	July 2017	\$3 million
Develop housing programs and options for juvenile justice involved youth	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services; Unified School District 2; Regional Systems Program Directors	July 2017	\$350,000
Ensure juvenile justice involved youth have access to DCF's broad array of services through wraparound funding for unique service expenditures	Division of Clinical and Community Consultation and Support; Fiscal Services Division; Regional Systems Program Directors	Mar.-Jun. 2017	\$250,000 to \$500,000
Enhance Quality Assurance system for the FREE program	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services	Mar.-Jun. 2017	No cost
Amend key juvenile justice contracts to allow services to remain	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services; Division of Grants	July 2017	No cost

in place after the end of delinquency commitment within existing appropriations	and Contracts		
Develop an intensive wrap-around teaming process for youth who would otherwise be placed in secure confinement	Division of Adolescent & Juvenile Services (with consultation from national experts)	July 2017	\$2.2 to \$2.5 million

Detention and Diversion Release Plan

From the plan:

“The final component of the new community supervision strategies includes continuing to promote shared access to contracted services. Currently, DCF and CSSD fund myriad community-based programs that are designed to serve their distinct populations. DCF has reviewed its current contracts and, in many, has removed exclusionary criteria that prohibit access. The programs that are available regardless of agency affiliation include in-home services; such as, MDFT, MDFT-RAFT, MST, MST-FIT, MST-TAY, and MST-PSB; and community-based services including ACRA, EMPS, ACCESS Mental Health, Outpatient Clinics and Extended Day Treatment. CSSD will review its current contracts and vendors and develop new access criteria and procedures for high/very high risk youth. It is important to note that beds/slots that are currently contracted solely by DCF may not be available to children on the delinquency side. With existing and anticipated budget cuts, both agencies have been forced to reduce bed/slot capacity. Shared services will only be effective if there is a corresponding influx of appropriations. **If the community supervision strategies are found to be effective in reducing recidivism, the necessary funding must be available to expand and sustain the practice and services needed to fully implement and effective juvenile justice system that addresses both the child’s needs and protects the community.**” (Emphasis added) Judicial Branch and Department of Children and Families. *Detention and Diversion Release Plan*. Pursuant to Section 5 of Public Act 16-147. February 3, 2017. p 12.

Alliance member organizations:

AFCAMP, Center for Children’s Advocacy, Center for Effective Practice / CHDI, Connecticut Legal Services, Connecticut Voices for Children, Connecticut Youth Services Association, Community Partners in Action, FAVOR, LifeBridge, NAMI Connecticut and the Keep the Promise Coalition, Office of the Chief Public Defender, Office of the Child Advocate, RYASAP, The Village for Families and Children